



# Community Connection

Autism Connections: a Pathlight program

# Newsletter

## Autism Conference News!

A reminder that the 29th Annual Autism Conference takes place on April 23, 2019 at The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel in Springfield. Doors open at 8:00 a.m. with the Exhibitor Showcase, breakfast and sign-in. Presentations begin at 9:00 a.m. and the conference concludes at 4:00 p.m. Click [HERE](#) to view the full conference schedule.

### Discount for a table of 8!

We are offering a special discount for organizations or schools who reserve a full table of 8. If you register 8 people (reservation must be entered online with 8 names) we are offering a discounted fee of \$100. That is a savings of \$200 for an organization or school that would like to spend a day of team building and inspiration!

### Exhibitors

Our Exhibitor Showcase includes the following organizations - Autism Learning Partners, Autism Connections, Bay Path University, Berkshire Hills Music Academy, BFair, Boston University's Family and Autism Research Lab, BHN, Cambridge College, Collaborative for Educational Services, Communication Therapy Associates, Autism Collaborative Project at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Crystal Springs School, Department of Developmental Services, Easter Seals, Elms College, Exceptional Lives, Family Empowerment, Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), Galactic Smarties, MassMatch,

Miracle League of western Massachusetts, New England Business Associates, Parker Counsel Legal Services, Pathlight, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (Home Modification Program), Positive Behavior Supports (Team PBS), Riverside Industries, SchKIDules, Service Net's Prospect Meadow Farm, Springfield Jewish Community Center (Kehillah), Strides Human Performance Institute, Sunshine Village, The Complete Puzzle, UCP of Western Massachusetts, UMass Developmental Milestones Lab, Western MA Fragile X Chapter, Whole Children, Young Living Essential Oils.

### Contributing Sponsors and Exhibitors!

Many of our exhibitors this year are also Contributing Sponsors, and they include: Berkshire Hills Music Academy, BFair, Elms College of Graduate and Professional Studies, Exceptional Lives, Galactic Smarties, Strides Human Performance Institute and Sunshine Village. Thank you for your support!

The registration rates are \$125 for professionals (\$100 for a full table of 8) and \$75 for parent, caregivers, and people with autism. Registrations are online and invoices can be provided to facilitate the use of Purchase Orders.

Be sure to sign up early to ensure there is still room in your favorite breakout sessions.

We hope to see you for a day of education, inspiration, and connection!

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413.529.2428

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Pittsfield, MA 01201  
413.443.4780

*Our Mission: To help families, schools, professionals, agencies, and communities understand autism, promote the well-being of individuals with autism, and foster their inclusion in the community.*

[donate](#)



# NEWS & UPDATES

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## Berkshire Activities

### Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County, April Meeting

Our April meeting will highlight Rick Hawes, BCARC Director of Employment Services. The BCARC Employment Program provides comprehensive, individualized employment services that help people with a wide range of disabilities succeed in life and work.

Julie Hayden, another spotlight speaker for April, will review ABA at Positive Behavior Supports Corp. PBS is an agency committed to the principles of Positive Behavior Support to improve not only behavior, but also the quality of life for the individuals we serve, their families, and others who support them.

ACBC meetings are open to the public. We welcome anyone who would like to learn more about autism resources in the community to attend. We encourage fellow services providers, educators, and families to bring information to share with the group or to display on our resource table. You can find out more about other ACBC Collaborative of Berkshire County events [HERE](#).

### ACBC April Calendar of Events

For more info, click [HERE](#)

#### Puzzle Pieces & Pizza

**April 3, 6pm–8p**

**UCP of Western MA Offices:**

2 locations; Pittsfield- 208 West Street; North Adams, 535 Curran Highway, \$5

#### Resource Fair & Art Show

**April 5, 5pm–7pm**

**Autism Collaborative of Berk Cnty:**

*Ad Lib, 215 North St, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Blue Art Show & Artist Reception

**April 5, 5pm–8pm**

**Downtown Pittsfield, Inc**

*33 Dunham Mall, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Functional Communication Training

**April 9, 6pm–8pm, Positive Behavior Supports:**

*Autism Connections, 75 South Church St, Suite 402, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Art for All!

**April 17, 4pm–6pm, BFAIR & CATA:**

*The Green, 85 Main Street, Suite 105, North Adams, FREE*

#### Autism Awareness Paint 'N Snack

**April 17, 6pm–8:30pm, AdLib**

*Ad Lib, 215 North St, Pittsfield, \$25*

#### Sensory Friendly Movie Night

**April 17, 6:30pm,**

**Hillcrest Educational Foundation**

*Hillcrest Academy, 400 Columbus Ave, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Autism Connections: Autism Conference

**April 23, 8am–4pm**

*Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, Registration Fee Applies*

#### ACBC: Creativity for Action!

**April 24, 6pm–7:30pm**

*Ad Lib, 215 North Street, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Berkshire Spring Drama Production

**April 25, 7pm, CIP:**

*Spectrum Playhouse, 20 Franklin St, Lee, FREE*

#### ACBC: Autism Awareness - Rally

**Friday, April 26, 2019, 5pm–7pm**

*Park Square, Pittsfield, FREE*

#### Berkshire County Arc

**April 26, 8am–4pm, Family Support**

**Conference, Country Club of Pittsfield, Registration Fee Applies**

## Conference Breakout Sessions

**Breakout Sessions will be offered in both the morning and afternoon. Please choose your preferred workshop for each session when registering for the conference, either online or with a hard copy. Register online here: <http://bit.ly/ACconference2019>**

### 1. Weaving the Way to a Successful School to Adulthood

*Rick Hawes, Director of Employment Services at Berkshire County Arc*

In-depth overview of the key concepts and methods to facilitate young adults smoothly transitioning into adulthood and employment. This presentation will review best practices in the transition process to assist parents, educators, and human services agencies to provide quality outcomes.

### 2. Autism and Me

*Alison Butler (paraprofessional), Milan Bonilla-Cruz (student)*

Allison Butler (Paraprofessional) along with her former student (and book illustrator) Milan Bonilla-Cruz co-authored a children's book together, and this workshop will describe their process. This book is written through eyes of Milan as he describes himself to show how he is similar to his typical classmates, as well as what might be harder for him, and specific strategies that help him that might also help other students with autism.

### 3. Teaching Boundaries and Relationships to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism

*Brian Melanson, Program Assistant at Whole Children and Maggie Rice, Program Director at Whole Children*

This presentation will focus on the Whole Selves curriculum and the practical skills teachers employ to create meaningful classroom experiences. This sexuality education program provides a basic foundation for learners of all abilities in a variety of topics pertaining to self-esteem, healthy relationships, healthy boundaries and sexuality; we would like attendees to understand the basics of our curriculum while also learning some skills for facilitating meaningful conversations and interventions in their own setting.

### 4. No More Books Not More Parent and Teacher Dirty Looks

*Keynote speakers Gina (Terrasi) Gallagher and Patricia Terrasi*

Helping special needs children get the services they need to learn can be a stressful experience for parents as well as educators operating in the constraints of tight school system budgets. In

this fun and interactive workshop, presented at colleges and universities around the county, Patty and Gina share both the parent and educator perspective and provide real solutions for how parents and teachers can come together and meet in the middle of the IEP table.

### 5. ARICA: Autism and Insurance - What Families Need to Know

*Amy Weinstock, Director of the Autism Insurance Resource Center at the University of Massachusetts' Medical School's Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center*

This presentation will discuss autism insurance for families in Massachusetts, including MassHealth and recent changes; eligibility and how to figure out what coverage you need; Premium Assistance; The Health Connector; covered treatments and how to access them; frequently asked questions, and where to get assistance; and the relationship between ARICA and your MassHealth plan.

### 6. Communication Supports for Individuals with Autism

*Maggie Wurm, Assistive Technology Specialist at Collaborative for Educational Services and Jeanne Tuthill, SLP, Assistive Technology Specialist at Collaborative for Educational Services*

Many individuals with autism experience significant challenges with communication and social skills. These difficulties can be pervasive, affecting all areas of life. These individuals often benefit from visual strategies to support effective communication to help build relations as well as aide their comprehension of the world around them. A variety of visual supports and strategies to supply daily functional communication needs will be discussed, along with low and high tech Assistive Technology options.

### 7. Bridging the Gap: Intersection of ABA and Mental Health Counseling

*Yvette Stoddard, Director of Academic Services – ASD; April Roche, Clinical Director/Clinician; Danielle Miller, Behavioral Analyst; Hillcrest Educational Centers*

Panel discussion for attendees to ask questions on how to get professionals to collaborate

respectively, while aligning with their codes of conduct and ethical consideration. The workshop will also review an introduction to Trauma Informed Care and the therapeutic model and how those are bridged.

### 8. Grief-Strategies for People With Autism

*Shelly Lenn, The Garden: A Center for Grieving Children and Teens, and previously Rick's Place*

Youth ages 5-18 can fully benefit from knowing the truth when someone close in their life dies. In this workshop participants will learn how to explain what death means, the range of feelings that can come up, and the importance of commemoration. Simple language will be shared, as well as readily available resources.

### 9. The Journey Continues: Successes and Challenges in Adulthood

*The Panel is comprised of DDS Autism Service Coordinators and adults with autism who will share their experiences.*

What happens after school and transition are over? DDS has now extended eligibility for adult services to adults with autism who do not have intellectual disabilities. This panel discussion will address the unique challenges that these adults experience.

Areas of focus include living independently and other housing models, job training and the journey to maintaining competitive employment, attending college, and forming relationships and a social network.

### Psychological and Neuropsychological Evaluations: Navigating the Process and Making Sense of the Results

*David Kieval, Clinical Psychologist with specialty working with children, adolescents and families*

A comprehensive psychological evaluation can be a uniquely valuable tool in understanding a child's profile and how to best help him or her find success and fulfillment. Come learn what psychological evaluations are and what they can do for you. This session will address when and why you might seek evaluation, what types of evaluations to pursue for different goals, and what to expect from the discussion of specific instruments and domains that are likely to show up for children with autism.

## Center News

### April Vacation Week Activities

Got Spring Fever? So do we! Join us for these fun sensory-friendly activities during school vacation week! Register for either or both events with Danielle Plasse at [Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org) or 413-529-2428 ext. 115.

#### Sensory-Friendly Roller Skating

Wednesday, April 17, 2019,  
9:30am - 11:30am  
Interskate 91 South  
2043 Boston Road, Wilbraham  
Cost: FREE



Come enjoy this sensory-friendly roller skating experience. The music will be off, and the lighting will be slightly lowered. Adaptive aids for skating will be available.

#### Bounce! Trampoline Park

Thursday, April 18, 2019,  
9:00am- 10:00am  
1250 St. James Ave,  
Springfield, COST: \$10 per child, One caregiver/parent per child is allowed in free. CASH ONLY, PLEASE.



Sensory-Friendly Hour at Bounce! This event continues to be extremely popular. We will have the park open only to Autism Connections for this hour. The music is off for this sensory-friendly hour.

#### Training: Insight Into Autism

Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 5:30pm - 7:30pm  
Location: Pathlight 220 Brookdale Dr., Springfield  
This training discusses the strengths and challenges that are often experienced by individuals on the autism spectrum. Areas covered include: diagnostic criteria, receptive and expressive communication skills, social competencies, sensory challenges, and common behavioral challenges. Attendees will learn practical strategies to facilitate the growth and development of students. There will be time for questions and answers.

## Advocacy Day/Fairs

### Annual Autism Advocacy Day at the Great Hall of the Statehouse

April is Autism Awareness and Understanding Month, and it's full of events and activities to celebrate our local community. In addition, April brings the opportunity to bring our voices directly to our state legislators— join us and the Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM) for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Autism Advocacy Day on Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am – 11:30am at the Great Hall of the State House in Boston. Make your voice heard with other families, self-advocates and providers! For more information, go to <http://www.afamaction.org/upcoming-events>.



## transition fairs

### Springfield/Westfield DDS Transition Fair

Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 6:00pm-8:00pm at The Basketball Hall of Fame, 1000 Hall of Fame Ave, Springfield. More info at 413-887-5773, Rachel Ingraham.

### Holyoke/Chicopee DDS Transition Fair

Thursday, April 11, 2019, 4:30pm-6:30pm at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, 617 Montgomery St., Chicopee. More info at 413-534-3299, Karen Fletcher.

***Young adults 14 to 22 years of age with an intellectual or developmental disability or autism, who are still enrolled in school are invited (with their families) to attend the Transition Fairs.***

## 2019 Flutie Grant Application Is Ready—Apply Now!

### Get your application in today!

We are excited to announce that the *Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism* has once again generously awarded Autism Connections a grant to support local families. The focus of this grant is to enhance the quality of life for people with autism. Autism Connections has been awarded \$10,000 to provide allocations to families of children with autism, which may be used for a wide variety of purposes related to best supporting an individual.

Families that meet the criteria will be eligible to receive up to \$300.00 to purchase items or fund activities that empower, enhance and provide opportunities for their child with autism. This grant cannot fund the purchase of iPads.



Those applying for the grant must meet the following criteria:

- *Have a low to moderate household income*
- *Must be a family of a child or adult child with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum residing at home*
- *Must be living in Hampshire, Franklin, Hampden Counties, or the Worcester County towns of Royalston, Athol, Petersham, and Phillipston*
- *Must NOT be receiving services through the MA Autism Waiver Program*
- *Must NOT be receiving services through the DDS DESE Program*
- *Must NOT be receiving Adult DDS Services*
- *Must NOT be receiving services through the DDS IFFS Program*
- *Must be willing to turn in receipts from funds used and submit a thank you note to the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism*

Find the application online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Flutie2019>

If you need a hard copy of the application, please call Danielle Plasse 413-529-2428 X115. Applications must be received at Autism Connections, 116 Pleasant St. Suite 366, Easthampton, MA 01027 by 5:00 on May 1st. If mailing in, please send to the attention of Joyce Paige and must be postmarked by 5:00 pm on May 1st



**ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY May 1, 2019 AT 5:00 P.M.**

Thank you to the *Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism* for their continuing support of local families through Autism Connections!

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WEDS

AUTISM CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

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Social Skills Gym Class  
4:00pm-5:00pm  
Patterson Field House  
Berkshire CC

Adult Employment Workshop  
6:00pm-8:00pm, Inclusive Commu-  
nity Center, Hadley

Springfield/Westfield DDS Transition  
Fair, 6:00-8:00 pm, Springfield

Yoga Class 4 :00pm-5:00pm  
Autism Connections'  
Pittsfield Office

Autism Connections, Parent  
Support  
5:30pm-7:30pm, Holyoke

Navigating Social Nuances  
6:00pm-7:30pm

14

15

16

17

Social Skills Gym Class (see  
above) 4:00pm-5:00pm

Insight into Autism Training  
5:30pm - 7:30pm  
Pathlight Offices, 220  
Brookdale Dr, Springfield

Sensory-Friendly Roller Skating  
9:30am - 11:30am  
Interskate 91 South, Wilbraham

Yoga Class 4 :00pm-5:00pm  
(see above)

Navigating Social Nuances (see  
above) 6:00pm-7:30pm

21

22

23

24



Yoga Class 4 :00pm-5:00pm  
(see above)

Aspergers' Support Group  
5:00pm-6:00pm  
Autism Connections, Pittsfield

7th Annual Autism Resource Night,  
6:00pm-7:30pm, McMahan School,  
Holyoke

Navigating Social Nuances (see  
above) 6:00pm-7:30pm

28

29

30

Social Skills Gym Class  
(see above)  
4:00pm-5:00pm

Athol Autism Resource Fair,  
6:00pm-7:30pm, Athol Public  
Library, Athol

# THURS

# FRI

# SAT

Adult Social Group  
4:00pm-6:00pm, Autism  
Connections' , Pittsfield Office

# 4

Berkshire Teen Group

# 5

# 6

Open Swim  
6:00pm-7:00pm, Gladys Allen  
Brigham Ctr , Pittsfield

Adult Social Group (see  
above) 4:00pm-6:00pm

# 11

Holyoke/Chicopee DDS Transition  
Fair, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Chicopee  
Comp Hs

ARHS Autism Awareness Night,  
4:45pm-7:00pm, Amherst

Open Swim (see above)  
6:00pm-7:00pm

Potluck Social, Karaoke &  
Video Game Night. 6:30pm-  
8:30pm, Inclusive Community  
Center  
41 Russell Street, Hadley  
Call 585-8010 for more info

# 12

# 13

Bounce! Trampoline Park  
9:00am- 10:00am  
Springfield,

# 18

Adult Social Group (see above)  
4:00pm-6:00pm

Open Swim (see above)  
6:00pm-7:00pm

ACBC monthly meeting  
10am—12:00pm  
BCArc Training Room,  
877 South Street, 3rd floor,  
Pittsfield

# 19

# 20

Adult Social Group (see  
above)  
4:00pm-6:00pm

# 25

Open Swim (see above)  
6:00pm-7:00pm

Berkshire Teen Group

# 26

BCArc Family Support  
Conference –Person Centered  
Thinking, caring about your  
family  
:30am-3:00pm, Country Club  
of Pittsfield, 639 South St.,  
Pittsfield

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**PLEASE CALL OUR  
OFFICE AT  
413-529 2428 x115 IF YOU  
HAVE ANY QUESTIONS  
ABOUT THESE EVENTS.**

# April 2019

# EVENTS & CLASSES

## AUTISM AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

### Light it Up Blue—Ninth Annual Autism Awareness and Acceptance Celebration

Tuesday, April 2, 2019, 5:30pm-8:30pm, UMass Medical School, Albert Sherman Center, 55 Lake Ave. North, Worcester

For more information, use <https://shriver.umassmed.edu/liub>



### Autism Resource Fair

Thursday, April 4, 2019, 6:00pm -7:30pm, Amherst Regional Middle School, 170 Chestnut St., Amherst  
Amherst Schools hosting resource fair for parents and guardians of students with autism. For information, contact Jennifer McIntire at 413-362-1228.

### BCArc Family Support Conference –Person Centered Thinking, caring about your family

Friday, April 26, 2019, 8:30am-3:00pm, Country Club of Pittsfield, 639 South St., Pittsfield

Sophia Johansson will be presenting an overview of a course that was developed by families to help their loved one develop a vision for a good life. For more information please click [HERE](#).

### Amherst Regional High School Autism Awareness Night

Thursday, April 11, 2019, 4:45pm—7:00pm, Amherst Regional High School, Amherst

Presentations from students and ARHS alumni with autism. Specific time has been set aside before and after presentations for people to check out resources.

### Athol Autism Resource Fair

Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 6:00-7:30pm, Athol Public Library, Athol

The Athol Autism Task Force is hosting it's first North Quabbin Autism Resource Fair! Learn about local services and build a sense of community. For further information, please contact Katie Drumm at 413-529-2428 X111 or email [Katie.drumm@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Katie.drumm@pathlightgroup.org).

## WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

### Training: Insight Into Autism

Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Location: Pathlight 220 Brookdale Dr, Springfield

This training discusses the strengths and challenges that are often experienced by individuals on the autism spectrum. Areas covered include: diagnostic criteria, receptive and expressive communication skills, social competencies, sensory challenges, and common behavioral challenges. Attendees will learn practical strategies to facilitate the growth and development of students. There will be time for questions and answers.

### Adult Employment, Where to start?

April 9, 2019, 6:00pm-8:00pm, Family Empowerment, 41 Russell St., Hadley, FREE

Everyone has valuable skills to bring to the community and a workplace. Join our discussion with representatives from Viability, Riverside Industries and NEBA about how to overcome the barriers to employment. Contact Michelle Mendes at [michelle.mendes@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:michelle.mendes@pathlightgroup.org) or 413-585-8010.



## CONFERENCE

### Autism Connections Annual Conference: HOPE in Action: Building Blocks to a Fulfilling Life

Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 8:00pm—4:00pm, Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel

During Autism Awareness Month in April over 400 parents, educators and professionals gather to build

knowledge around the most current information on autism.

New this year are exciting breakout sessions and a new location. Visit our [website](#) for information.





## COMMUNITY/FAMILY EVENTS

### UCP FREE Swim

Gladys Allen Brigham Center  
Thursdays, 6:00pm–7:00pm  
165 East St, Pittsfield



Open and FREE to all individuals and families affiliated with UCP and Autism Connections. Registration is required. Call the GAB center at 413-442-5174 X 25 or the Berkshire Family YMCA at 413-663-6529.

Please note there will be no staffing at open swim. All children must be accompanied by an adult and all adults that will need personal care must come with a caregiver.

### North Quabbin Caregiver's Support Group (meets twice a month), 361 Main St., Athol 2nd Monday of the month, 6:00pm-7:30pm

Self-facilitated gathering to engage conversation, share resources and ideas as well as networking.

### 3rd Thursday of the month, 6:00pm-8:00pm

A training, workshop, roundtable discussion or information session based on caregivers' needs and/or concerns. No RSVP is required to attend but is helpful for planning. Call Karon Parker at 413-774-5558 x1047.

### Art Explorations

April 1, 2019—June 1, 2019, Fees apply  
Milestones, 41 Russell St, Hadley. 16+

This class is for teens and adults with special needs who have an interest in exploring the visual arts. Whether you're an accomplished artist or someone looking to discover your creative side, this class offers a little bit of everything: drawing, painting, printmaking, fiber arts, and collage. Learn a new artistic technique, practice a known one, or bring one of those unfinished projects from home that you just haven't gotten around to finishing.

## YOUNG ADULTS

### Greater Springfield Pizza & Game Night

Wednesday, April 3 @ 6:00pm-8:00pm, , First  
Congregational Church of E. Longmeadow, 7  
Sommers St., E. Longmeadow, \$12.00

Have dinner, socialize, and play games (feel free to bring and share your own favorite games). This is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and to welcome many new AANE members! \*Please note that attendees now have the option to pay online or at the door. We encourage people to pay online but it is not required. To register, please click [HERE](#).

### Amherst Pizza & Game Night

Thursday, April 4, 2019 @ 6:00pm-8:00pm, UMass  
Amherst Campus, Campus Ctr, 9th Floor, Room 904  
Same info as Greater Springfield Pizza . To register,  
call Stephanie Birkdale at 617-393-3824x32

### Film Screening: Swim Team

Sunday, April 7, 4:00pm-7:00pm, Chicopee  
HOPE Autism Support Group is screening the  
documentary film *Swim Team*, about members of a  
New Jersey swim team who have autism. Please  
email [camorgado@verizon.net](mailto:camorgado@verizon.net) for more information.

### Annual Autism Advocacy Day at the Statehouse with AANE

Thursday, April 11, 2019, 9:00am-11:30am  
Great Hall, The State House, Boston Massachusetts  
Join families, self-advocates and providers to make an  
impact with your legislators for this important event.  
Contact Judy Zacek at 781-891-6270 x 6102 or visit  
[www.afamaction.org](http://www.afamaction.org) for more information.

### Holyoke Pizza & Game Night

Thursday, April 25 @ 6:00pm-8:00pm, Multi Culture  
Center, 260 Westfield St., Holyoke, \$12.00  
Same info as Greater Springfield night. To register,  
call Stephanie Birkdale at 617-393-3824x32

### Milestones

41 Russell St., Hadley, MA

Recreational programs for young adults in Hadley,  
more info [HERE](#).

### Whole Children

41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA, See the catalog [HERE](#).

# SUPPORT GROUPS

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	MEETING DETAILS	CONTACT/MORE INFO
<b>AMHERST</b>			
<b>Clinical &amp; Support Options (CSO) Parent Support Group</b>	For parents of children/youth with high functioning autism (Asperger's). Come share your experience, learn about resources, and hear from experts in the field. Childcare available. This is a parent led support group.	1st Saturday of the month 10:00am-11:30am Bridge Family Resource Center 101 University Dr, Suite A3	Group meets on Saturdays. Childcare available, refreshments served. Please call 413.549.0297 with questions.
<b>ATHOL</b>			
<b>Autism Caregiver's Support Group</b>	This is a monthly support group for parents, caregivers, grandparents and siblings of autistic children. RSVP is required.	4th Sunday of the month, 6:00pm-8:00pm, Athol Memorial Hospital, The Hillis Board Room 2033 Main St.	Please contact Amanda Gallant at <a href="mailto:Amanda.gallant@heywood.org">Amanda.gallant@heywood.org</a> with questions or to RSVP.978-257-5143
<b>North Quabbin Caregiver's Resource Group</b>	This group is self facilitated in a setting to engage conversation, share resources, ideas and network.	Second Monday of the month, 6:00pm-7:30pm, 361 Main Street	Call Karon Parker at 413-774-5552 X1047 for more information.
<b>North Quabbin Caregiver's Resource Group</b>	This group will include trainings, workshops and roundtable discussions for those individuals who care for someone with disabilities.	Third Thursday of the month. 6:00pm-8:00pm.	Call Karon Parker at 413-774-5552 X1047 for more information.
<b>The United ARC, Caregivers' Resource Group</b>	Socialize with other caregivers and help support each other through all of the ins and outs of being a caregiver or parent to a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities.	2nd Monday is for conversation and networking. 3rd Thursday of the month, presentations, workshops and more 6:00pm-8:00pm, 361 Main Street	Refreshments will be provided. RSVP is not required, but is helpful for planning purposes. Call Karen Parker at 978-249-4052, x 1047.
<b>CHICOPEE</b>			
<b>HOPE Autism Support Group</b>	This group is designed for parents and caregivers of family members on the autism spectrum to meet and talk with others that are on the same journey in a positive and confidential environment.	Group meets on the 2nd Friday of each month.	For more information or to RSVP, please contact Cathy at <a href="mailto:camorgado@verizon.net">camorgado@verizon.net</a> .
<b>GREENFIELD</b>			
<b>Special Needs Family Alliance</b>	This support group is a new, very committed and welcoming group for anyone who is caring for a loved one with a disability, no matter the age. The group's goal is providing support, advocacy, education and resources	3rd Thursday of each month 10 am Pathlight Office, 101 Munson St.	For more information please call or email Caroline Wenck at 413-585-8010 x122 or <a href="mailto:carolinewenck@pathlightgroup.org">carolinewenck@pathlightgroup.org</a>
<b>HOLYOKE</b>			
<b>Autism Connections Western MA Support Group</b>	This support group is open to all family members of children and young adults with autism. The group is designed for parents and other caregivers to come together for support and to share information.	2nd Wednesday of the month 5:30pm-7:30pm MCS 260 Westfield Road	Email Linda Manning at <a href="mailto:wynne92@aol.com">wynne92@aol.com</a> for RSVP and more info. Childcare is offered and requires a reservation one week in advance. 413.529.2428.
<b>Parent/Professional Advocacy League</b>	Moving Forward: Our Journey. A group for empowering families through transition planning.	Please contact PPAL for locations and times.	For more information visit <a href="http://www.ppal.net">www.ppal.net</a>
<b>Rainbow Support Group of Western Mass.</b>	This group provides support and info to individuals with intellectual challenges who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or those who are questioning.	Fourth Wednesday of the month. Western Mass Training Consortium 187 High Street, Suite 2303,	For ore information, call Ness at 413-997-4205 or emailed at <a href="mailto:nbellini@wmtcinfo.org">nbellini@wmtcinfo.org</a> .
<b>Leadership Through Advocacy (LTA)</b>	Come have your voice heard, learn and develop skills to speak up for yourself, grow individually and make the world better by participating in legislative advocacy.	First and third Wednesday of the month, Holyoke Community College,, Frost 309 5:30-7:30PM	For ore information, call Ness at 413-997-4205 or emailed at <a href="mailto:nbellini@wmtcinfo.org">nbellini@wmtcinfo.org</a>

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	MEETING DETAILS	CONTACT/MORE INFO
<b>NORTHAMPTON</b>			
<b>Valley ADHD Parent Support Group</b>	This group is for parents and caregivers to receive ADHD information and support. It is a place where you can be heard and not be judged.	First Monday of the month, 6:30-8:00pm Northampton Area Pediatrics 193 Locust St.	For more information call 413-584-8700 x226
<b>Northampton Women's Drop-In Support Group</b>	Support group for women with Autism, ages 18+. This free group is being offered by the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE).	Second Monday the month, Forbes Library, 20 West Street	For more information or to join this group, contact Stephanie Birkdale at <a href="mailto:stephanie.birkdale@aane.org">stephanie.birkdale@aane.org</a> .
<b>Wire Monkey Mama's Coffee Club</b>	A bi-wkly meetup and solidarity circle like grand, step, foster, and any mama who cares for a child.	Every other Monday evening 6:00pm-7:00pm, 1 Market Street,	At The Roost in Northampton. For more information, text Yoshi at 413-347-2517
<b>PITTSFIELD</b>			
<b>Asperger's Support Group of the Berkshires</b>	This group is for individuals with Asperger's syndrome to come together and offer friendship, fellowship and support.	Wednesdays, 5:00pm-6:30pm Group will meet in various locations.	Please contact Elizabeth Flaherty at 443.4780 x16 or <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Flaherty@pathlightgroup.org">Elizabeth.Flaherty@pathlightgroup.org</a> to RSVP.
<b>Berkshire Teen Group</b>	This group is for teens and young adults who live in Berkshire County and are on the autism spectrum. The group meets regularly for conversation and community based activities.	Will meet regularly, every other Friday evening, throughout the community.	Please contact Ben Breton at <a href="mailto:benjamin.breton@pathlightgroup.org">benjamin.breton@pathlightgroup.org</a> or 413.529.2428 x121 for monthly group schedule and outing details.
<b>SPRINGFIELD</b>			
<b>Impact Center Support Group</b>	A monthly support group for parents and caregivers of youths' with social/emotional/behavioral challenges. El Support Network en colaboración con Gandara ofrece un grupo de apoyo mensual para padres y cuidadores de jóvenes con problemas sociales / emocionales y de	English Group: 1st Friday of the month 12pm-1:30pm Grupo Español-Y el tercer Viernes de 10am-11:30am 41 Taylor Street, Springfield	For information and to RSVP, please contact Cynthia Santiago at <a href="mailto:csantiago@wmtcinfo.org">csantiago@wmtcinfo.org</a> or 413-218-5055 Informacion de RSVP: Cynthia Santiago at <a href="mailto:csantiago@wmtcinfo.org">csantiago@wmtcinfo.org</a>
<b>Self Advocacy Network (SAN)</b>	Come have your voice heard, learn and develop skills to speak up for yourself, grow individually and make the world better by participating in legislative advocacy.	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of every month, 11 Wilbraham Rd, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor in the SC@N 360 Conference room, 5:30pm-7:30Ppm	For ore information, call Ness at 413-997-4205 or emailed at <a href="mailto:nbellini@wmtcinfo.org">nbellini@wmtcinfo.org</a>
<b>WESTFIELD</b>			
<b>Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome</b>	This group is an opportunity for support and discussion among adults on the autism spectrum. We provide a "safe space" and as such are not recommended for friends and family members except in a support role.	Building Autistic Community, Inc 507 Southampton Road #1	For more information, contact the group at <a href="mailto:info@bacautism.org">info@bacautism.org</a> or call BAC at 413.359.0222.
<b>WILLIAMSBURG</b>			
<b>Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome</b>	This group is an opportunity for support and discussion among adults on the spectrum. We provide a "safe space" so this is not recommended for friends and family members except in a support role.	Building Autistic Community, Inc. 507 Southampton Road #1 Westfield, MA	For more information, contact the group at <a href="mailto:info@bacautism.org">info@bacautism.org</a> or call BAC at 413.359.0222.

**ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS**

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	DATES/TIMES
Before formal registration for the below groups, a 1-1 informational meeting with the facilitator is required. The link for more information is <a href="https://conta.cc/2DwDWrl">https://conta.cc/2DwDWrl</a>		
<b>Online Support Group: Parents of Teen Boys</b>	This online support group will focus on topics of particular interest to parents of tween boys. Remaining Meeting dates: 4/11/2019, 4/25/2019, 5/9/2019, 5/23/2019	12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m.. \$120



**Autism Connections**  
A Program of Pathlight, Inc.  
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027

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2019 April Edition

# Community Connection

Autism Connections: a Pathlight program

# Newsletter

## **Last call for Autism Conference *Community Awards* nominations**

Who makes all the difference in your loved one's life? Fill out a nomination form by the April 3 deadline and if chosen, you and your nominee will both be offered admission to the conference (as your time allows).

**"You Are There for Me Award"** is presented to a person who has demonstrated ongoing support and devotion to a family. Previous winners have included grandparents, neighbors, community helpers, and anyone else who makes that extra effort to be so supportive.

**"Above and Beyond Award"** is presented to a professional who has provided outstanding care and support to a person with autism and his/her family. Previous winners have included respite providers, para-

professionals, PCA's and other staff that work with a family or individual.

**"Community Inclusion Award"** is presented to a person or establishment that has been welcoming to a person with autism. Previous winners have included restaurants, retail stores and salons.

**"Excellence in Advocacy Award"** is presented to a parent, professional or person with autism who has demonstrated ongoing and effective self-advocacy or advocacy for people with autism. Parents, teachers, and people with autism have all won this award in the past.

**"Collaboration & Connection"** honors excellence in teamwork to effect positive change for people with autism. If you would like to nominate an extra special someone for an award, download the form [HERE](#).